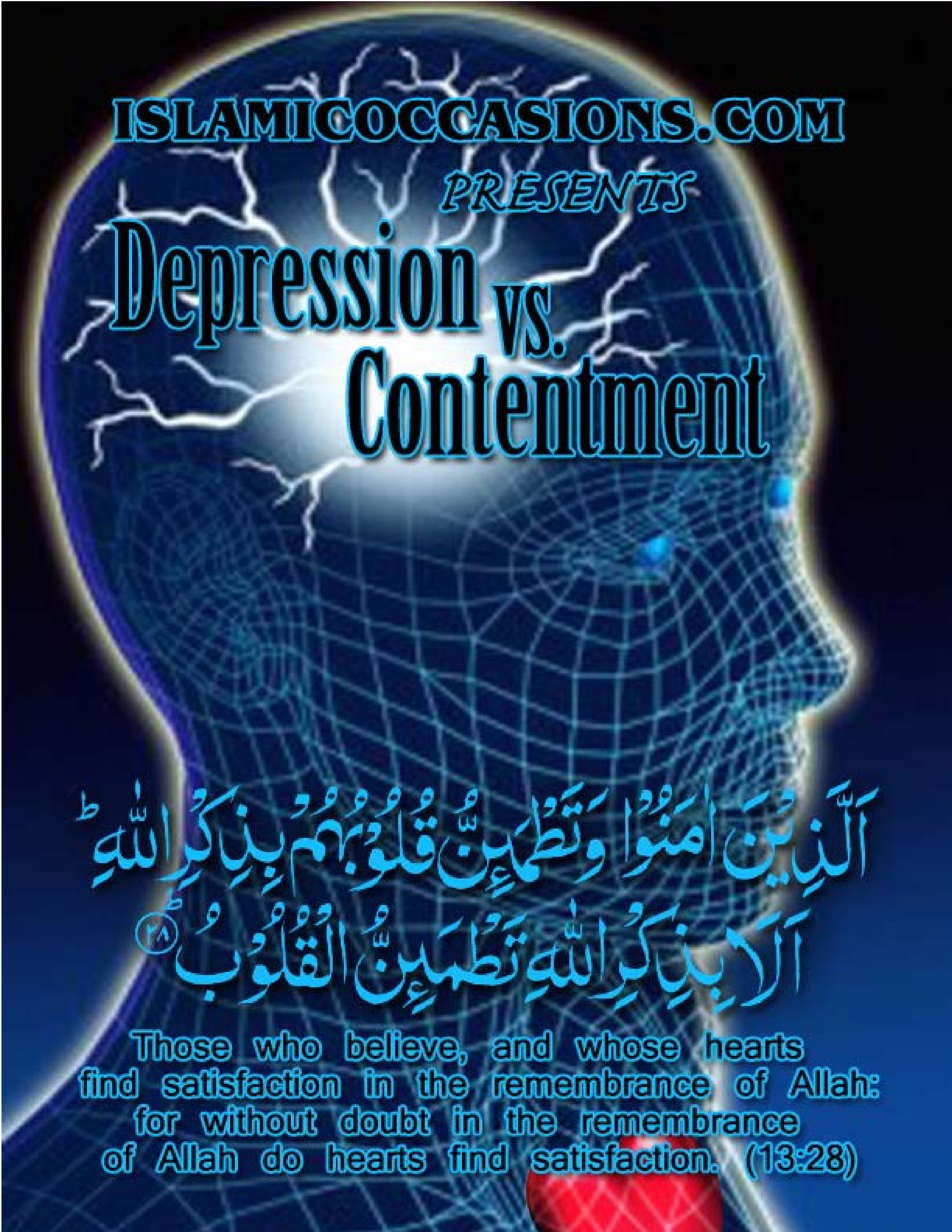

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PRESENTS
Depression vs. Contentment
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۗ
أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ ﴿٢٨﴾
Those who believe, and whose hearts
find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah:
for without doubt in the remembrance
of Allah do hearts find satisfaction. (13:28)

Introduction

We all experience unhappiness and bereavement at some point in life time. Our faith and belief in Almighty God's will are usually enough to console and strengthen our sense of loss, grief or sadness. However as human beings we are prone to feelings of depression under serious and difficult circumstances. It has been said that depression affects up to 40% of people at some stage in their lives, and has been found to be more common in women than in men. Depression can seriously affect a person's daily life.

If you have grown tired of life, or wish to go someplace where you can be alone, or you are always nervous, stressed, worthless, restless, sleepless and gloomy, you are probably suffering from depression. One could expect such a person to be suffering from this **'illness'** who is incapable of fulfilling his needs or a time has come in his life that he feels totally helpless and defeated, either as a result of an unfortunate death, a missed opportunity, a financial loss, persistent feeling of depravity, or some other unexpected (class exam results) disappointing experience, long-term illness, unnecessary negative thinking. This can invariably contribute towards feelings of jealousy, fear, cowardice, pessimism and insecurity. A heightened form of this 'illness' could force the sufferer into committing suicide or even setting himself ablaze. It is a pity though that today this 'illness' has become rampant at every level of society and its disastrous effects result in the form of all sorts of hideous crimes depending upon the circumstances and history of the sufferer.

Our objective is not to delve into the causes of depression, rather to focus on just the 'illness' itself from a different perspective. The analysis is from a religious perspective and becomes all the more important for a Muslim since the word despair should not exist in his dictionary.

In layman's terms, depression can be of two forms: one finds its roots in the chemical disorientation of the sufferer whereas the other can be attributed to social circumstances. A psychiatrist can help recuperate the victim belonging to the former category whereas a psychologist can attend to cases forming the latter group.

From a social viewpoint it can be said without any misgivings that a true Muslim can never suffer from this 'disease'. The answer lies in this fundamental understanding, which governs (or should govern), a Muslim's life: his life with all its ups and downs is a trial.

"No affliction comes about but by Allah's permission; and whoever believes in Allah, He guides aright his heart; and Allah is Knower of all things." (Holy Qur'an 64:11)

Therefore for a Muslim, difficulties, suffering, failures and adversities are nothing but a test from Almighty God. Perhaps as vital for the continuation of life as is oxygen for breathing. It cannot be that life goes on at a relative level of poverty or affluence till the end. The crests and troughs of this wave of life have an implicit existence. Every rise is sooner or later followed by a fall.

"So, verily, with every difficulty, there is relief. Verily, with every difficulty there is relief." (Holy Qur'an 94:5-6)

There are some for whom the sea is more turbulent hence the rise and fall of the tide is more

marked. There are others who experience this rise and fall in a manner that almost defies the existence of any alteration. Despite the odds in a given condition, a true Muslim with his strong faith in the Almighty, observes the silver lining, something that promises him a more desirable and everlasting reward in the Hereafter:

"And We will most certainly try you with somewhat of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits; and give good news to the patient." (Holy Qur'an 2:155)

Hence for a true Muslim, his faith (Imaan) in Almighty and hereafter is the biggest treasure of wealth in this materialistic world and due to this strong faith, he never suffer from any kind of depression and no worries whatsoever.

The one who seeks to be independent!

One of the companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) once found himself in severe poverty. His wife advised him to go to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and request his help. The man approached the Holy Prophet (pbuh), but as soon as the Prophet (pbuh) eyes fell upon the man, he said:

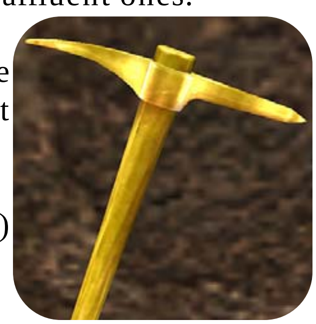
If a person seeks something from me, I shall certainly grant it to him, but if he were to exhibit himself as being self-sufficient and free from want, Allah (swt) shall make him affluent.

Hearing this, the man said to himself, The Holy Prophet (pbuh) has intended me by this speech of his. Without uttering a word, he returned home and narrated the incident to his wife.

His wife said, The Holy Prophet (pbuh) is also human; explain your dilemma to him and see what he has to say.

The man returned to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) for the second time but heard the same sentence from him and again came back home without saying a word. When this was repeated for the third time, the man borrowed a pickaxe from one of his friends and set off towards the mountains. Throughout the day he worked hard to gather firewood, which he sold for some flour and that night, he and his wife had bread for dinner.

The next day, he worked harder and collected more firewood and this continued for several days till he was able to purchase a pickaxe for himself. After some period, as a result of his hard work, he managed to purchase two camels and a slave, and slowly became one of the affluent ones.



One day, arriving before the Holy Prophet (pbuh), he narrated to him the events of his life and the effect of his words, whereupon the Holy Prophet (pbuh) responded:

I had said (before): "One who seeks to be independent (of others), Allah (swt) shall make him independent."

The Moral: My dear friends, during hardships we should not loose our hope in the mercy of Allah (swt), because those difficulties are not beyond our scope. Holy Qur'an says: **"... We do not impose on any soul a duty except to the extent of its ability ..."** (6:152)

Let us learn a moral lesson from the story of Donkey

One day a farmer's donkey fell down into a well. The animal cried piteously for hours as the farmer tried to figure out what to do. Finally he decided the animal was old, and the well needed to be covered up anyway; it just wasn't worth it to retrieve the donkey. He invited all his neighbors to come over and help him. They each grabbed a shovel and began to shovel dirt into the well.



At first, the donkey realized what was happening and cried horribly. Then, to everyone's amazement, he quieted down. A few shovel loads later, the farmer looked down the well, and was astonished at what he saw.

As every shovel of dirt hit his back, the donkey did something amazing. He would shake it off and take a step up. As the farmer's neighbors continued to shovel dirt on top of the animal, he would shake it off and take a step up.

Pretty soon, everyone was amazed, as the donkey stepped up over the edge of the well and trotted off.

The Moral: My dear friends, life is going to shovel dirt on you, all kinds of dirt. The trick to getting out of the well is to shake it off and take a step up. Each of our troubles is a stepping stone. We can get out of the deepest wells just by not stopping, never giving up! Shake it off and take a step up! Never loose hope and place your complete 100% trust in Almighty God as shown in the following story. A true Muslim never gives up hope in the mercy of Allah (swt), because it is a sin.

When the winds blow

Years ago a farmer owned land along the Atlantic seacoast. He constantly advertised for hired hands. Most people were reluctant to work on farms along the Atlantic. They dreaded the awful storms that raged across the ocean, wreaking havoc on the buildings and crops.

As the farmer interviewed applicants for the job, he received a steady stream of refusals.

Finally, a short, thin man, well past middle age, approached the farmer.

"Are you a good farmhand?" the farmer asked him. "Well, I can sleep when the wind blows," answered the man.

Although puzzled by this answer, the farmer, desperate for help, hired him. The little man worked well around the farm, busy from dawn to dusk, and the farmer felt satisfied with the man's work.

Then one night the wind howled loudly in from offshore. Jumping out of bed, the farmer grabbed a lantern and rushed next door to the hired hand's sleeping quarters. He shook the little man and yelled, "Get up! A storm is coming! Tie things down before they blow away!"

The little man rolled over in bed and said firmly, “No sir. I told you, I can sleep when the wind blows.”



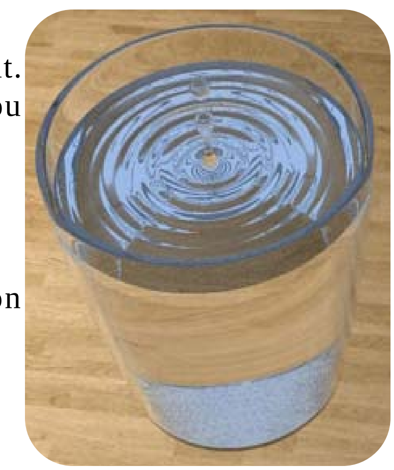
Enraged by the response, the farmer was tempted to fire him on the spot. Instead, he hurried outside to prepare for the storm. To his amazement, he discovered that all of the haystacks had been covered with tarpaulins. The cows were in the barn, the chickens were in the coops, and the doors were barred. The shutters were tightly secured. Everything was tied down. Nothing could blow away.

The farmer then understood what his hired hand meant, so he returned to his bed, also to sleep while the wind blew.

The Moral: My dear friends, when you’re prepared, spiritually, mentally and physically, you have nothing to fear. Can you sleep when the wind blows through your life? The hired hand in the story was able to sleep because he had secured the farm against the storm.

We with faith secure ourselves against the storms of life by putting our trust in Almighty God, Our Holy Prophet (pbuh) and his Ahlul Byat (pbut), we don’t need to understand, and we just need to hold His hand to be secure in the midst of the storms. And sleep well!

Put the Glass down!



A professor began his class by holding up a glass with some water in it. He held it up for all to see and asked the students, How much do you think this glass weighs?

50 grams... 100 grams... 125 grams... the students answered.

I really don’t know unless I weigh it, said the professor, but, my question is: What would happen if I held it up like this for a few minutes?

Nothing! The students replied.

Ok! What would happen if I held it up like this for an hour? the professor asked.

Your arm would begin to ache, said one of the students.

You’re right, now what would happen if I held it for a day?

Your arm could go numb; you might have severe muscle stress and paralysis and have to go to hospital for sure! Ventured another student; and all the students laughed.

Very good. But during all this, did the weight of the glass change? asked the professor.

No! The students replied.

Then what caused the arm ache and the muscle stress? The students were puzzled.

Put the glass down! Said one of the students.

“Exactly!” said the professor. Life’s problems are something like this. Hold it for a few minutes in your head and they seem okay. Think of them for a long time and they begin to ache. Hold it even longer and they begin to paralyze you. You will not be able to do anything.

The Moral: My dear friends, it’s important to think of the challenges (problems) in our life, but EVEN MORE IMPORTANT is to have trust in Allah (swt) and to ‘put them down’ at the end of every day before we go to sleep. That way, we are not stressed, wake up every day fresh and strong and can handle any issue, any challenge that comes our way!

So, as it becomes time for us to leave our work, Remember friends to ‘PUT THE GLASS DOWN’ and have tranquility by putting trust in Almighty Allah (swt).

Holy Qur’an says: **“He it is who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers that they might have more faith added to their faith.”** (48:4) Tranquility is sign of strong faith while worries and stress is sign of weak faith.

Tell to your mind every day before you go to sleep: **“O soul that is at rest satisfied. Return to your Lord well-pleased (with Him), well-pleasing (Him). So, enter among My servants, and enter into my Paradise.”** (Holy Qur’an 89:27-30)

By worrying so much, do not turn your life to hell. Good luck.

A great lesson of life from one of the smallest creatures of Allah (swt): the Ant

One morning I wasted nearly an hour watching a tiny Ant carry a huge feather cross my back terrace. Several times it was confronted by obstacles in its path and after a momentary pause it would make the necessary detour.



At one point the Ant had to negotiate a crack in the concrete about 10mm wide. After brief contemplation the Ant laid the feather over the crack, walked across it and picked up the feather on the other side then continued on its way.

I was fascinated by the ingenuity of this ant, one of God’s smallest creatures. It served to reinforce the miracle of creation. Here was a minute insect, lacking in size yet equipped with a brain to reason, explore, discover and overcome. But this Ant, like the two-legged co-residents of this planet, also shares human failings.

After some time the Ant finally reached its destination - a flower bed at the end of the terrace and a small hole that was the entrance to its underground home. And it was here that the Ant finally met

its match. How could that large feather possibly fit down small hole?

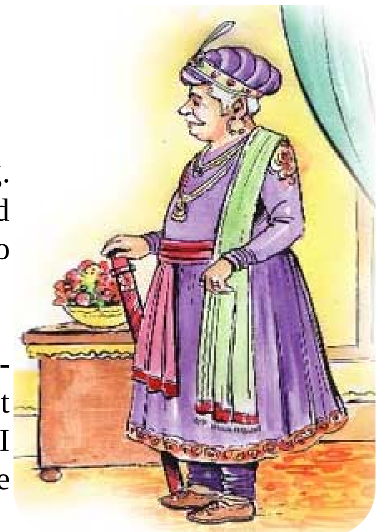
Of course it couldn't. So the Ant, after all this trouble and exercising great ingenuity, overcoming problems all along the way, just abandoned the feather and went home.

The Ant had not thought the problem through before it began its epic journey and in the end the feather was nothing more than a burden.

The Moral: My dear friends, Isn't OUR LIFE like that?

We worry too much about our family; we worry about money or the lack of it, we worry about work, about where we live, about all sorts of things. These are all burdens - the things we pick up along life's path and lug them around the obstacles and over the crevasses that life will bring, only to find that at the destination they are useless and we can't take them with us.

This too shall pass!



A king called all of his wise men and counselors together for a meeting. He addressed them and said, "I want you to go and think, read, and research. Consult the wisest and most learned men in the land. Spare no expense."

"I want you to find the ONE statement that will get me through all situations in life. Whether I am on top of the world or in the pits, find that statement." "I don't want to learn long and complicated philosophies. I want one simple statement. Find it or write it; I don't care, just bring me the statement."

The men left and consulted for months. They finally returned and handed the King a scroll.

The King unrolled the scroll. On it was written four words. "THIS TOO SHALL PASS!" That was it.

The wise men explained. When you are on top of the world, that is but a fleeting moment, things change, always remember, this too shall pass. When you are in the pits, all nights are followed by day, at your lowest moments remember also, this too shall pass.

All external circumstances and material things change. No matter what your circumstances, remember, "THIS TOO SHALL PASS!"

The wise men reminded the great King that this would get him through his earthly things but the truly wise knew there were things beyond this earth and life. Things that were eternal.

True wisdom they reminded the King was in the ability to recognize the fleeting temporal things of the material world from the truly eternal things.

O Great King they said, "Most of the things that you worry or gloat about are temporary and our four words apply."

The Moral: My dear friends, for most of our situations... “THIS TOO SHALL PASS!”

Holy Qur’an says: **“Everyone on it must pass away. And there will endure for ever the person of your Lord, the Lord of glory and honor.”** (55:26-27)

The Illusion of reflection

Once there was a king who had presented his daughter, the princess, with a beautiful diamond necklace. The necklace was stolen and his people in the kingdom searched everywhere but could not find it. Some said a bird might have stolen it. The king then asked them all to search for it and put a reward for $50,000 for anyone who found it.

One day a clerk was walking home along a river next to an industrial area. This river was completely polluted, filthy and smelly. As he was walking, the clerk saw a shimmering in the river and when he looked, he saw the diamond necklace. He decided to try and catch it so that he could get the $50,000 reward. He put his hand in the filthy, dirty river and grabbed at the necklace, but some how missed it and didn’t catch it. He took his hand out and looked again and the necklace was still there. He tried again, this time he walked in the river and dirtied his pants in the filthy river and put his whole arm in to catch the necklace. But strangely, he still missed the necklace!



He came out and started walking away, feeling depressed.

Then again he saw the necklace, right there. This time he was determined to get it, no matter what. He decided to plunge into the river, although it was a disgusting thing to do as the river was polluted, and his whole body would become filthy. He plunged in, and searched everywhere for the necklace and yet he failed. This time he was really bewildered and came out feeling very depressed that he could not get the necklace.

Just then a saint who was walking by, saw him, and asked him what was the matter? The clerk didn’t want to share the secret with the saint, thinking the saint might take the necklace for himself, so he refused to tell the saint anything. But the saint could see this man was troubled and being compassionate, again asked the clerk to tell him the problem and promised that he would not tell anyone about it. The clerk mustered some courage and decided to put some faith in the saint. He told the saint about the necklace and how he tried and tried to catch it, but kept failing. The saint then told him that perhaps he should try looking upward, toward the branches of the tree, instead of in the filthy river.

The clerk looked up and true enough, the necklace was dangling on the branch of a tree. He had been trying to capture a mere reflection of the real necklace all this time.

The Moral: My dear friends, material happiness is just like the filthy, polluted river; because it is a mere reflection of the TRUE happiness in the spiritual world. We can never achieve the happiness we are looking for no matter how hard we endeavor in material life. Instead we should look upwards, toward Almighty God, who is the source of real happiness, and stop chasing after the reflection of this happiness in the material world. This spiritual happiness is the only thing that can satisfy us completely.

The Signs of Happiness

There was a young couple who led a very happy life together. The only thing that they worried about was, whether their happiness would last forever or would they too would have to face problems.

One day, they heard that a wise old man had come to town; he could solve all kinds of problems and guide people. So the couple decided to visit the wise old man and tell him their source of worry.

The wise old man told them; "Travel around the world and seek a man and a woman who are perfectly happy as a couple. When you find such a couple, ask them for a piece of cloth from the man's shirt, then keep that piece of cloth with you, and you always remain happy."

The young couple began their journey, to find the happiest couple in their world. In one place they heard that the governor and his wife were the happiest people, so they went to their palace and asked them, "Are you the happiest couple?"

The governor and his wife replied, "Yes, we are happy in every way except for one thing; we do not have any children."

Well that didn't make the governor and his wife the happiest couple. So they continued their journey. They arrived in one city where they had heard that the happiest couple lived. They went to their house and asked them, "Are you the happiest couple?"

The couple replied, "Yes, we are really happy in every way except that we have too many children which make our life a bit uncomfortable."

No, this couple did not sound to be the happiest. And, so they continued their journey. They visited many countries, cities, towns and villages asking the same question but they did not find what they were looking for.

One day the young couple came across a shepherd in the desert. The shepherd was grazing his sheep when his wife and child came along. The shepherd greeted his wife and gently patted the child she was carrying. She laid the mat and started to eat contentedly. The young couple came to them and asked them, "Are you the happiest couple?"

The shepherd and his wife replied, "Nobody is unhappier than the king." The young couple immediately realized that they were the happiest couple and asked them for a piece of the shepherd's shirt, so that their happiness too would last throughout.

The shepherd said, "If I give you a piece of cloth from my shirt then I will be left without any clothes since I own just one shirt."

The young couple at once understood that it is very difficult to find perfect happiness anywhere in the world. The couple decided to return to their own country. They went to the wise old man and related all that had taken place. They also complained that his guidance was difficult to abide by.

The wise old man laughed and said, “Was your journey useless or did you learn something from it?”

The young man replied, “Yes, after this trip I have learnt that in this world, nobody is perfectly happy, only that person is happy who does everything to please God.”

Holy Qur’an says: **“And whosever follows My (Allah’s) guidance, on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve.”** (2:38)

The wife said, “I have learnt that in order to be happy it is important to remember two things; first, all human beings should be thankful and contented with whatever they have.”

Holy Qur’an says: **“And your Lord declared publicly: if you are grateful, I will add more favors unto you.”** (14:7)

And secondly, for ultimate happiness one must always practice patience.

Holy Qur’an says: **“Seek help through patient perseverance and prayers.”** (2:45)

After that, young couple thanked the wise old man for his guidance and returned home. The wise man prayed for them and said, “Indeed the sign of happiness is in their heart and they have good manners and if the lifetime is spent in pleasure of God there would be no differences in the existence of mankind.”

Holy Qur’an says: **“Whosoever follows My (Allah’s) guidance, will not loose his way nor fall into misery. But whosoever turns away from My message, verily for him is a miserable life.”** (20:123-124).

The Moral: My dear friends, “Happy is the man who always kept the afterlife in his view, who remembers the Day of Reckoning through his deeds, who led a contented life and who was happy with the lot that Allah (swt) hath destined for him,” in the words of Imam Ali (pbuh).

Remember the five simple rules to be happy

1. Free your heart from hatred
2. Free your mind from worries
3. Live simply
4. Give more
5. Expect less



One who does not find joy at home will not find it anywhere

As the world continues to progress technologically, at the same time it is retrogressing morally and spiritually. The price we are paying for this economical development is huge. We are finding ourselves, expose to a society which has become morally ill. Life seems to become easier today theoretically, because we have such an advance mode of transportation, easy way of communication, in brief the world has become a global village. But as a matter of fact life has become more difficult and challenging today then previous times. Tension, frustration, depression has become very common in our daily life. Happiness, joy, prosperity seems to be the thing of the past.



Feelings of isolation and anxiety surround a major proportion of the world's population. The spirit of man has been damaged and snapped away from its nature. Families separate, justice cannot be found, people feel like used up.

Without money and beauty in today's world, a person is left behind; feeling of little value. Eating disorders, failed relationships and ever increasing low self esteem form a bitter, vicious circle of self destruction.

By putting our complete reliance on Allah (swt), verily one, who put his reliance on Allah (swt), takes life easy. The only way to avert financial depression is to convince ourselves as Allah (swt) is the sustainer of this universe. Then the fluctuation of currency, fake predictions of economists, and the competitiveness of the market will not make any difference. This is the modern day poverty. In the midst of effluence there is no joy. In the midst of comfort and luxury, there is absolute no happiness.

Everyone is searching for peace and happiness in his own way, because of the false perception of this world i.e., "if you are wealthy and healthy, you are content." But this is the biggest deception of this world. In reality wealth in essence is the contentment of heart. One who has contentment in his heart, then no amount of calamities or tragedies will harm or depress this man. Absolutely nothing in this world can depress this man.

Returning to the natural way of life as prescribed by Islam, is the only cure for all diseases of the body, heart, mind and soul. Drugs may stabilize body hormones and chemicals but at the end of it all, the soul needs peace - and that peace, which is the final cure, can only be found in Islam.



"Those who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah: for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction." (Holy Qur'an 13:28)



Money cannot buy you peace and happiness

In the south of Spain, there was a small village whose people were very joyful and lucky. The children played under the shade of trees in the gardens of their home. A shepherd boy whose name was Nasir, stayed near the village with his father, mother and grandmother. Early morning each day, he takes his herd of goats up the hills to find a suitable place for them to graze. In the afternoon he would return with them to the village. At night his grandmother would tell him a story. One night she narrated the story of stars. This story really interested Nasir. As usual, on one of these days, as Nasir was watching his herd and playing his flute, he suddenly saw a wonderful light behind the flower bush. When he came towards the branches he saw a transparent and most beautiful crystal ball.

The crystal ball was glittering like a colorful rainbow. Nasir carefully took it in his hand and turned it around. With surprise suddenly he heard a weak voice coming from the crystal ball. It said; “You can make a wish that your heart desires and I will fulfill it.” Nasir could not believe that he had actually heard a voice. But he became so engrossed in his thoughts for he had so many wishes but he must wish for something which was impossible like the wish to be able to fly. He said to himself, if I wait till tomorrow I will remember many things. He put the crystal ball in a bag and gathered the herd, happily returned back to the village. He decided that he would not tell anyone about the crystal ball. On the following day also, Nasir could not decide what to wish for, because he really had everything he needed.

The days passed as usual, and Nasir appeared to be very cheerful that the people around him were amazed to see his cheerful disposition. One day a boy followed Nasir and his herd and hid behind a tree. Nasir as usual sat in one corner, took out the crystal ball and for a few moments looked at it. The boy waited for the moment when Nasir would go to sleep. Then he took the crystal ball and ran away. When he arrived in the village, he called all the people and showed them the crystal ball. The citizens of that village took the crystal ball in their hand and turned it around with surprise. Suddenly they heard a voice from inside the crystal ball, which says, “I can fulfill your wish.” One person took the ball and screamed, “I want one bag full of gold.” Another took the ball and said loudly, “I want two chests full of jewelry.”



Some of them wished that they would have their own palace with grand door made from pure gold instead of their old houses. Some also wished for bags full of jewelry, but nobody asked for gardens in their palaces. All their wishes were fulfilled but still the citizens of the village were not happy. They were jealous because the person that had a palace had no gold and the person that had the gold had no palace. For this reason, the citizens of the village were angry and were not speaking to each other. There was not even one garden which existed in the village where the children could play. The patience of the children was running out and they were uncomfortable. Nasir and his family were happy and pleased. Every morning and afternoon he would play the flute.

The children could not wait anymore and decided to return the crystal ball to Nasir. The parents and neighbours went to him. The children said to Nasir; “When we had a small village we all were

happy and joyful." The parent also spoke. In one way or another nobody is happy. The expensive palaces and jewelry only bring us pain. When Nasir saw that the people were really regretful, he said I have not wished till now, if you really want everything to return to its own place, then I will wish for it. Everyone happily agreed. Nasir took the crystal ball in his hand turned around and wished that the village become the same as it was before. Everyone quickly turned towards the village and saw it became the same old village with gardens full of trees and fruits. Once again the people started to live happily and the children played under the shade of trees. From the next day and everyday at sunset the sound of Nasir's flute could be heard in the village.

The Moral: My dear friends, this story teaches us that we should be happy and content always, with whatever we have, because of the following reasons:



MONEY can buy bed, but not sleep;
MONEY can buy books, but not wisdom;
MONEY can buy food, but not appetite;
MONEY can buy medicine, but not health;
MONEY can buy finery, but not real beauty;
MONEY can buy paintings, but not the artistry;
MONEY can buy a house, but not a home;
MONEY can buy luxuries, but not culture;
MONEY can buy companions, but not friends;
MONEY can buy marriage, but not love;
MONEY can buy clothes, but not personality;
MONEY can buy anything, but not heaven;
MONEY can buy tombstone, but not death;
MONEY can buy almost everything, but not the dignity and respect of being who we are!

Now let us take a look at one more story called as "The club 99."

Some time ago, there lived a King. This King should have been contented with his life, given all the riches and luxuries he had. However, this was not the case! The King always found himself wondering why he just never seemed content with his life.

Sure, he had the attention of everyone wherever he went, attended fancy dinners and parties, but somehow, he still felt something was lacking and he couldn't put his finger on it.

One day, the King had woken up earlier than usual to stroll around his palace. He entered his huge living room and came to a stop when he heard someone happily singing away... following this singing... he saw that one of the servants was singing and had a very contented look on his face.

This fascinated the King and he summoned this man to his chambers.

The man entered the King's chambers as ordered. The King asked why are you so happy?

To this the man replied: "Your Majesty, I am nothing but a servant, but I make enough of a living to keep my wife and children happy. We don't need too much, a roof over our heads and warm food to fill our tummy. My wife and children are my inspiration; they are content with whatever little I

bring home. I am happy because my family is happy."

Hearing this, the King dismissed the servant and summoned his personal assistant to his chambers.

The King related his personal anguish about his feelings and then related the story of the servant to his personal assistant, hoping that somehow, he will be able to come up with some reasoning that here was a King who could have anything he wished for at a snap of his fingers and yet was not contented, whereas, his servant, having so little was extremely contented.

The personal assistant listened attentively and came to a conclusion. He said, "Your Majesty, I believe that the servant has not been made part of The 99 Club."

"The 99 Club? And what exactly is that?" the King inquired.

To which then he replied, "Your Majesty, to truly know what The 99 Club is, you will have to do the following... place 99 Gold Coins in a bag and leave it at this servant's doorstep, you will then understand what The 99 Club is."

That very same evening, the King arranged for 99 Gold Coins to be placed in a bag at the servant's doorstep. Although he was slightly hesitant and he thought he should have put 100 Gold Coins into the bag, but since his assistant had advised him to put only 99 Gold Coins that is what he did.

The servant was just stepping out of his house when he saw a bag at his doorstep. Wondering about its contents, he took it into his house and opened the bag. When he opened the bag, he let out a great big shout of joy...Gold Coins...so many of them. He could hardly believe it. He called his wife to show her the coins.



He then took the bag to a table and emptied it out and began to count the coins. Doing so, he realized that there were only 99 coins and he thought it was an odd number so he counted again, and again and again only to come to the same conclusion... 99 Gold Coins.

He began to wonder, what could have happened to that last 1 coin? For no one would leave 99 Gold Coins. He began to search his entire house, looked around his backyard for hours, not wanting to lose out on that one Gold Coin. Finally, exhausted, he decided that he was going to have to work harder than ever to make up for that 1 Gold coin to make his entire collection an even 100 Gold Coins.

He got up the next morning, in an extremely horrible mood, shouting at the children and his wife for his delay, not realizing that he had spent most of the night conjuring ways of working hard so that he had enough money to buy himself that gold coin. He went to work as usual - but not in his usual best mood, singing happily - as he grumpily did his daily errands.

Seeing the man's attitude change so drastically, the King was puzzled. He promptly summoned his assistant to his chambers. The King related his thoughts about the servant and once again, his assistant listened. The King could not believe that the servant who until yesterday had been singing away

and was happy and content with his life had taken a sudden change of attitude, even though he should have been happier after receiving the 99 Gold Coins.

To this the assistant replied "Ah! But your Majesty, the servant has now officially joined The 99 Club." He explained: "The 99 Club is just a name given to those people who have everything but yet are never contented, therefore they are always working hard and striving for that extra 1 to round it out to 100!

We have so much to be thankful for and we can live with very little in our lives, but the minute we are given something bigger and better, we want even more!

We are not the same happy contented person we used to be, we want more and more and by wanting more and more we don't realize the price we pay for it. We lose our sleep, our happiness; we hurt the people around us just as a price to pay for our growing needs and desires. That is what joining The 99 Club is all about."

Hearing this King decided that from that day onwards, he was going to start appreciating all the little things in life.

The Moral: My dear friends, striving for more is always good, but let's not strive so hard and for so much that we loose all those near and dear to our hearts, we shouldn't compromise our happiness for moments of luxuries!

This is the World, so beware of it!

A man accompanied Prophet Jesus (pbuh) the son of the honorable Saint Mary (pbuh) and said that he would go with him. They continued along until they came to a river. They sat and started to eat. They had three loaves of bread. They ate two of them and one remained.

Prophet Jesus (pbuh) went to the river, drank some water and returned. He did not find the third loaf. He (pbuh) asked the man who had taken that loaf. Man said that he did not know.

They continued until they came to a Doe followed by two fawns. Prophet Jesus (pbuh) beckoned one of the fawns, killed it, roasted it and they ate it. Then Prophet Jesus (pbuh) addressed the fawn [that had been eaten,] saying, "Live!" It came to life and went. Then Prophet Jesus (pbuh) said to the man, "By God! Who has shown you this miracle; tell me who took that loaf of bread?" He replied that he did not know.



They continued until they reached a lake. Prophet Jesus (pbuh) took the hand of the man and led him over the water. When they reached the other side, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) said, "By the One Who has shown you this miracle; tell me who took that loaf of bread?" He replied that he did not know.

They continued until they reached a desert. They sat down. Prophet Jesus (pbuh) gathered some sand or dust and said, "By the permission of Allah (swt), be Gold!" It became Gold. He (pbuh) divided it into three portions. And said,

"One third is for me, one third for you, and one third for whoever took that loaf of bread."

The man said immediately, "Alright, I took that loaf of bread."

Prophet Jesus (pbuh) said, "Then all the three portions of this Gold are yours." Then he (pbuh) left him.

The man encountered two other men in the desert. They wanted to take his Gold and kill him. He said, "Let us divide the gold into three portions." They sent one of them to the village to buy food.

The one who went said to himself, "Why should I let them have portions of this wealth? I shall put some poison into the food, and kill them." So, he poisoned the food.

The other two said, "Why should we give a third of this wealth to him. When he comes back, let us kill him, and divide the rest of the wealth between us."

When he returned, they attacked him and killed him. Then they ate the poisoned food and died. The wealth remained in the desert with the three dead men beside it.

Prophet Jesus (pbuh) passed them and saw the situation. He said to his disciples, "This is the world, so beware of it!"

The Moral: My dear friends, let us be happy and content always, with whatever we have. But never follow the deception of this world! In the words of Imam Ali (pbuh), "This world is like a serpent, so soft to touch, but so full of lethal poison. Unwise people are allured by it and drawn towards it, and wise men avoid it and keep away from its poisonous effects."

You are priceless to those who love you

Dejection is a state of sad thought, depression and a feeling of being worthless. This could be a result of anger with self or someone else, unexpressed anger, failure and frustration. Dejection is a deadly disease which can harm the body acutely or on a chronic basis and can irreversibly destroy one's relationships.

Almighty God gives everything its being and its life. Nothing is by accident. Everything is consciously created and directed to a goal, down to the tiniest detail. Nothing is worthless or trivial. Each thing plays its own role in achieving the goal of the whole creation. And human beings are the best creature of the universe (Ashraful Maqlukat); hence we have purpose in this life. So we should never feel worthless or useless.

Always make sure that you are priceless to those who love you as explained in the following story:

A well-known speaker started off his seminar by holding up a $20 bill (note). In the room of 200 people, he asked, "Who would like this $20 bill?" Hands started going up.



He said, “I am going to give this $20 bill to one of you but first, let me do this.” He proceeded to crumple up the $20 bill. He asked, “Who still wants it?” Still hands were up in the air.

“Well, what if I do this?” He dropped it on the ground and started to grind it into the floor with his shoe. He picked it up, now crumpled and dirty and asked, “Who still wants it?” Still hands went up into the air.

The Moral: My dear friends, we have all learned a very valuable lesson. No matter what was done to the money, it was still wanted because it did not decrease in value. It was still worth $20.

Many times in our lives, we are dropped, crumpled and ground into the dirt by the decisions we make and the circumstances that come our way. We may feel as though we are worthless.

But no matter what has happened or will happen, you will never lose your value: dirty or clean, crumpled or finely creased, you are still priceless to those who love you.

Also at the same time try to accept who you are in reality, because everyone is different. That’s the way, Almighty God created this world. Hence let us learn one more valuable lesson from the following story called as **“The cracked Pot.”**

Once upon a time there was a water-bearer in India who had two large pots, each hung on each end of a pole which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, and while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the master’s house, the cracked pot arrived only half full.

For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pot full of water in his master’s house.

Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.



After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water-bearer one day by the stream. “I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you.” “Why?” asked the bearer.

“What are you ashamed of?”

“I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half of my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your master’s house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work and you don’t get full value from your efforts,” the pot said. The water-bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion he said, “As we return to the master’s house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path.”

Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it some.

But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load, and so again it apologized to the bearer for its failure.

The bearer said to the pot, “Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of your path, but not on the other pot’s side?

That’s because I have always known about your flaw, and I took advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you’ve watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my master’s table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house.”

The Moral: My dear friends, each of us has our own unique flaw. But it’s the cracks and flaws we each have that make our lives together so very interesting and rewarding. You’ve just got to take each person for what they are and look for the good in them as Holy Qur’an says,

“O you men! surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other; surely the most honorable of you with Allah is the one among you most careful (of his duty); surely Allah is Knowing, Aware.” (49:13)

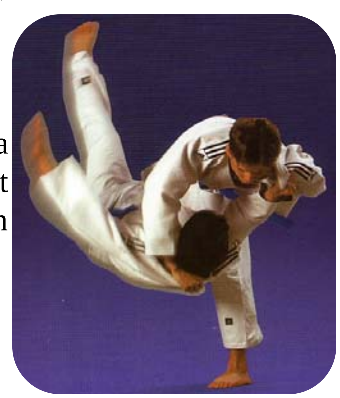
And at the same time we have to convert our flaw or weakness into strength in a positive manner, because sometimes our biggest weakness can become our biggest strength. Take, for example, the story of one 10-year-old boy who decided to study Judo despite the fact that he had lost his left arm in a devastating car accident.

The boy began lessons with an old Japanese Judo Master Sensei. The boy was doing well, so he couldn’t understand why, after three months of training the master had taught him only one move.

“Sensei,” the boy finally said, “Shouldn’t I be learning more moves?”

“This is the only move you know, but this is the only move you’ll ever need to know,” the Sensei replied.

Not quite understanding, but believing in his teacher, the boy kept training. Several months later, the Sensei took the boy to his first tournament. Surprising himself, the boy easily won his first two matches. The third match proved to be more difficult, but after some time, his opponent became impatient and charged; the boy deftly used his one move to win the match.



Still amazed by his success, the boy was now in the finals.

This time, his opponent was bigger, stronger, and more experienced. For a while, the boy appeared to be overmatched. Concerned that the boy might get hurt, the referee called a time-out. He was about to stop the match when the sensei intervened.

“No,” the Sensei insisted, “Let him continue.”

Soon after the match resumed, his opponent made a critical mistake: he dropped his guard. Instantly, the boy used his move to pin him. The boy had won the match and the tournament. He was the champion.

On the way home, the boy and Sensei reviewed every move in each and every match. Then the boy summoned the courage to ask what was really on his mind. “Sensei, how did I win the tournament with only one move?”

“You won for two reasons,” the Sensei answered. “First, you’ve almost mastered one of the most difficult throws in all of Judo. And second, the only known defense for that move is for your opponent to grab your left arm.”

The Moral: My dear friends, the boy’s biggest weakness had become his biggest strength.

Is depression condemned in Islam?

No, depression is not condemned in Islam. Feeling depressed is but human; Islam does not want us to be superhuman; it only wants us to get out of this state as soon as possible.

In this regard, the true philosophy of life should be understood. We have been created by the Almighty to be tested and tried [Who created death and life that He may try you, which of you is best in deeds; and He is the Mighty, the Forgiving (Holy Qur’an 67:2)]. This trial is conducted through the circumstances we are put in. If we are put through good circumstances, then our trial is whether we remain thankful to the Almighty, who gave us without asking and without our having any right. If we are put through bad circumstances, then our trial is whether we show perseverance and patience in these times or not.

Both these circumstances generally come in a person’s life. They are his real test. He cannot be given total happiness or total misery since that would make the trial profoundly difficult. It is evident from the Holy Qur’an that the Almighty tests us through hardships:

1. to punish us for our own misdoings (42:30),
2. to shield us from greater misery (18:74, 18:79),
3. to sift out the evil within us (3:179),
4. to give us the opportunity to earn reward by showing patience (3:142, 76:12).

In such circumstances, a person must remember that Allah (swt) is our only Saviour and Refuge. One Whom we will never lose like our other relations; Who is always with us and Who always thinks well for us. Our objective as a Muslim is to surrender to His will, since we know that He always means well for us. This is the essence of Islam.

Is it true that the calamities of this world will not touch the man of contentment? No, it is not true, because calamities will touch everyone, but the way he reacts to the calamities will be different. He will not get in the emotions to handle the situation. People react to their problems in different ways, some being more vulnerable than others. As the saying goes, “Winners don’t do different things. They do things differently.” Let us read the following story called as **“Be a Lake”** to understand it better.

Be a Lake

The old Master instructed the unhappy young man to put a handful of salt in a glass of water and then to drink it. "How does it taste?" the Master asked. "Awful," spat the apprentice.



The Master chuckled and then asked the young man to take another handful of salt and put it in the lake. The two walked in silence to the nearby lake and when the apprentice swirled his handful of salt into the lake, the old man said, "Now drink from the lake."

As the water dripped down the young man's chin, the Master asked, "How does it taste?" "Good!" remarked the apprentice. "Do you taste the salt?" asked the Master. "No," said the young man.

The Master sat beside this troubled young man, took his hands, and said, "The pain of life is pure salt; no more, no less. The amount of pain in life remains the same, exactly the same. But the amount we taste the 'pain' depends on the container we put it into."

The Moral: My dear friends, when you are in pain, the only thing you can do is to enlarge your sense of things... "Stop being a glass. Become a lake!"

The source of our problems...!

A group of working adults got together to visit their University lecturer. The lecturer was happy to see them. Conversation soon turned into complaints about stress in work and life.

The Lecturer just smiled and went to the kitchen to get an assortment of cups - some porcelain, some in plastic, some in glass, some plain looking and some looked rather expensive and exquisite.

The Lecturer offered his former students the cups to get drinks for themselves.



When all the students had a cup in hand with water, the Lecturer spoke: "If you noticed, all the nice looking, expensive cups were taken up, leaving behind the plain and cheap ones. While it is normal that you only want the best for yourselves, that is the source of your problems and stress. What all you wanted was water, not the cup, but we unconsciously went for the better cups."

"Just like in life, if life is water, then the job, money and position in society are the cups. They are just tools to hold/maintain Life, but the quality of life doesn't change."

If we only concentrate on the cup, we won't have time to enjoy, taste and appreciate the water in it.

The Moral: My dear friends, the lecturer continued his advice and said: "According to Holy Qur'an, the sources of our problems are four (4):

We strain our eyes in longing for the things which other people have, and forget our own bounties given by Allah (swt) and forget to enjoy them. Holy Qur'an says:

Nor strain your eyes in longing for the things We have given for enjoyment to parties of them, the splendor of the life of this world, through which We test them: but the provision of your Lord is better and more enduring. (20:131)

We complain so much about trivial pains and problems we face in this world, while forget the actual suffering we may face in the Hereafter due to our wrongdoings and negligence. We also forget to realize that actual pleasure is in fulfilling our duty to ease the sufferings of people around us. Holy Qur'an says:

And thus do We recompense him who transgresses beyond bounds and believes not in the Signs of his Lord: and the Penalty of the Hereafter is far more grievous and more enduring. (20:127)

We are so much after the conveniences and glitter of this world that we forget the core purpose of our life; which is a test with full of sufferings in order to obtain reward of PARADISE from our Lord in the Hereafter. Holy Qur'an says:

The (material) things which you are given are but the conveniences of this life and the glitter thereof; but that which is with Allah is better and more enduring: will you not then be wise? (28:60)

We take the life in the world as permanent and spend all our sources just building it as if death is for 'somebody else and not for us,' while we forget the fact that eternal life is that of Hereafter.

But the Hereafter is better and more enduring. (Holy Qur'an 87:17)

Let us stop complaining and enjoy and appreciate our life which is an investment for a blissful eternal life in the Hereafter. Once Imam Ali (pbuh) was asked: "If choice given, what would you prefer: life in this world or death?"

Imam Ali (pbuh) surprised the man by replying: "I will select life in this world because through it I will be able to earn the pleasure of my Lord."

In the end, it has to be said that the so called ups and downs are a necessary part of our lives which are a blessing in disguise for they can help us earn greater rewards in the Hereafter.

Having Allah (swt) on your side does not mean, sailing on the ocean with no waves and storm. Having Allah (swt) on your side means sailing on such a ship which no storm can sink.

يَٰٓأَيَّتُهَا ٱلنَّفْسُ ٱلْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ﴿٢٧﴾
ٱرْجِعِىٓ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ
رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً ﴿٢٨﴾
فَٱدْخُلِى فِى عِبَٰدِى ﴿٢٩﴾
وَٱدْخُلِى جَنَّتِى ﴿٣٠﴾

"O soul that is at rest satisfied.
Return to your Lord well-pleased
(with Him), well-pleasing (Him).
So, enter among My servants,
and enter into my Paradise." (89:27-30)

Akramulla Syed